Chapter 1

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

At King Stephen's coronation mass on 22 December 1135, the archbishop of Canterbury forgot to include the kiss of peace.[1] The reign which followed was blighted by war: against the Scots and the Welsh, against Geoffrey count of Anjou in Normandy, and against rival contenders for the throne in England. In Geoffrey's wife Empress Matilda and their son the future Henry II, Stephen faced far more formidable challengers for his kingdom than William Rufus and Henry I had encountered in the person of Robert Curthose, and in battling on to defend his position he showed that he was not without ability. His personal courage and skill as a soldier were acknowledged even by hostile commentators,[2] while those of more balanced judgement observed several kingly virtues in him, notably his generosity and fair-mindedness.[3] Settlements he negotiated can easily be condemned for giving too much away, but on closer scrutiny appear as the product of careful calculation: for instance, the first treaty of Durham in 1136 involved the surrender by the Scots of several recent acquisitions,[4] while the charter of 1146 containing lavish grants to the earl of Chester was largely confined to properties he already controlled and envisaged that some might eventually be restored

[1] The story seems to have become well known: JH, 286–7; Howden, I, 189; Gervase, I, 94–5; *Chronica Regum Mannie & Insularum*, ed. G. Broderick (Manx Museum, 1979), f. 36 (probably composed at Rushen Abbey, daughter-house of Stephen's own foundation at Furness). The date follows *Hist. Nov.*, 15–16.

[2] HH, 738; Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (OMT, 1983), 474.

[3] *Hist. Nov.*, 20; OV, VI, 544–5; *Gesta Steph.*, 22–3.

[4] Of the five castles seized by David king of Scots when he invaded England immediately following Stephen's coronation, four (Wark, Alnwick, Norham and Newcastle) were surrendered under the first treaty of Durham, although David retained Carlisle as the base for control of much of Cumbria (JH, 287; RH, 145–6; G. W. S. Barrow, 'The Scots and the North of England' in King, *Anarchy*, 231–53, esp. 246).

to the king.[5] Against Stephen, it must be said that his decision early in his reign to use earldoms as a cheap form of patronage played into the hands of barons eager to assert their independence, leading to the fragmentation of government once the civil war began;[6] he was perceived as being open to manipulation[7] and his penchant for suddenly arresting those in his peace seriously damaged his reputation, probably contributing to his failure to win over Angevin loyalists in the later stages of the war. But, as will be argued in the next chapter, he maintained the administrative traditions of Henry I through the 1140s and early 1150s, albeit within a reduced area of the kingdom, and once the peace settlement came he applied them in parts of England previously out of his control. To preserve the apparatus of Henry I's government through fourteen years of civil war was no mean achievement. It provided Henry I's grandson with the foundations upon which the restoration of royal authority could be built.

Of course, Henry II gave Stephen no credit. It suited his purposes to present himself as the continuator of Henry I's reign, not that of his immediate predecessor, so that he could be free to recover the estates and reclaim the rights lost by the crown since 1135. This was the theme of his coronation charter, which confirmed the grants his grandfather had made and abolished the evil customs he had condemned.[8] Such thinking lay behind the edict, apparently issued soon after his accession, ordering sworn inquests into the former extent of royal demesne, so that losses could be restored to the crown.[9] It was apparent in the countless royal writs and charters which sought to restore, for the beneficiaries, the situation as it was either in Henry I's reign generally, or specifically at his death.[10] It also informed the Constitutions of Clarendon in 1164, with their claim to be setting out the customs of Henry I.[11] Chroniclers of Henry II's time or later took up the message that prerogatives ceded and concessions wrought during Stephen's reign had no validity, and so reinforced the impression that he was a usurper and his time one of uniform 'unpeace'. Accordingly, the sufferings of his reign were seen to have lasted the full nineteen years, with a breakdown in law and order following hard upon Henry I's succession by a weak and worthless

[5] *RRAN*, III, no. 178; G. J. White, 'King Stephen, Duke Henry and Ranulf de Gernons, earl of Chester', *EHR*, 91 (1976), 555–65; P. Dalton, 'Ranulf II and Lincolnshire' in A. T. Thacker, ed., *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters* (Journal of Chester Archaeological Society, 71, 1991), 109–34; P. Dalton, '*In neutro latere:* the armed neutrality of Ranulf II earl of Chester in Stephen's reign', *ANS*, 14 (1992), 39–59 (esp. 45–7).

[6] G. J. White, 'Continuity in government' in King, *Anarchy*, 117–43 (at 124–9, 133–5) and below, ch. 2; cf. *Hist. Nov.*, 23.

[7] *Ibid.*, 20 (cf. near the end of the reign, HH, 772–4).

[8] *Select Charters*, 158.

[9] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, I, ed. H. T. Riley (RS, 1867), 123; Warren, *Henry II*, 218, n. 1.

[10] Warren, *Henry II*, 217–20, 262.

[11] *Select Charters*, 163–4.

king.[12] But the depiction of the whole of the reign, rather than merely part of it, as a time of chaos does less than justice to such continuity in government as Stephen was able to maintain, and from which Henry II was able to profit.

The personality of the new king is not easy to summarise, despite there being three good contemporary assessments by members of his household. As his biographer Lewis Warren recognised, Henry II 'was a complex man, of contradictory qualities'.[13] His reputation as an industrious 'legislator king' with a genius for administrative proficiency, which persisted for over a hundred years following the publication of Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*, has now been challenged but continues to influence modern scholarly opinion.[14] In fact, it is not difficult to find evidence – in the verdicts of contemporary observers and in reports of his conduct during specific episodes in his life – to support two contrasting views of Henry II: on the one hand, that he was an intellectual who hated warfare, a gifted judge and a painstaking administrator, and, on the other, that he was a man of action who loved fighting and hunting, had little time for judicial affairs and preferred to leave routine business to others.[15] But conflicting statements of this nature are not irreconcilable. In the course of Henry's long reign, all of them were true at some time or other: with the changing circumstances of the passing years, different qualities surfaced at different times.

Since our concern is with the earliest phase of Henry's reign, it is important to stress that he came to the English throne at the age of twenty-one already accustomed to political success. Early in 1150 his father, Geoffrey Plantagenet count of Anjou, had abdicated Normandy to him; in September 1151 he had succeeded to Anjou, Maine and Touraine on his father's death; in May 1152 he had acquired Poitou and Aquitaine through marriage to the duchess Eleanor, former wife of Louis VII king of France; by the close of 1153 he had been promised the kingdom of

[12] *ASC*, 199; HH, 774. Cf. Newburgh, 1, 103 and *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. E. Searle (OMT, 1980), 212–13: below, ch. 2, nn. 15, 16.

[13] Warren, *Henry II*, 208.

[14] Henry II's concern with judicial administration is played down in J. Gillingham, 'Conquering kings: some twelfth-century reflections on Henry II and Richard I' in T. Reuter, ed., *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages* (London, 1992), 163–78, but (with due credit to the king's advisers) is stressed in e.g. P. A. Brand, '"Multis vigiliis excogitatem et inventam": Henry II and the creation of the English common law', *Haskins Society Journal,* 2 (1990), 197–222, and J. G. H. Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law* (London, 1996), 144–6.

[15] Warren, *Henry II*, 207–17, summarises the verdicts of several contemporaries, with full references. M. T. Clanchy in *Tractatus,* lxxvii–lxxix, surveys the range of modern opinion. Cases heard before Henry II early in his reign, narrated in detail in *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 176–218, suggest that it was difficult to gain access to the king, but that he could be most attentive to proceedings once they had reached him (cf. below, ch. 5, nn. 54–5).

England.[16] He had also shown himself to be a decisive and effective military commander, skilfully defending his continental lands against the king of France and his allies – including Stephen's son Eustace – in the successive summers of 1151 and 1152.[17] This was a young man blessed with abundant energy, good fortune and self-confidence, a king who liked to keep on the move and who expected to get his own way. Accordingly, the assertion of his political authority, by negotiation where possible but by military force when necessary, was not only the most urgent governmental requirement but also the task for which – in this phase of his life – he was ideally suited by temperament.

It is hard to avoid the impression that the young Henry II relished the excitement of leading armies against recalcitrant vassals, to demand the surrender of former royal lands and castles: the recovery of royal rights enjoyed under Henry I became a convenient, readily understood justification for this endeavour. He could only be diverted from this task by the prospect of even greater adventures. A more mature statesman would not have contemplated a conquest of Ireland within a year of succeeding to England, a project abandoned – apparently – because of Empress Matilda's opposition. A more cautious king would not have embarked in 1159 on the costly and unsuccessful military expedition to Toulouse, in pursuit of Eleanor's claims to that county.[18] Neither enterprise could be validated by reference to Henry I, and in neither case had some fortuitous circumstance presented an opportunity which could not be allowed to pass. Henry II was responsible for the timing of these expansionist plans and they serve to underline the point that, at this stage, he was not yet the studious administrator who 'had at his fingertips . . . a great store of practical wisdom', as depicted by his later admirers.[19] In general, he was content to leave routine responsibility to his officials: it was their task to ensure that the machinery of royal government functioned as efficiently, and over as wide an area, as it had done under Henry I, while he concentrated on securing (and if possible extending) his frontiers, reclaiming lost lands, castles and revenues, and cowing the barons. Yet if this is the dominant impression left by Henry II in the first decade of his

[16] See esp. RT, 161–71, 177; Warren, *Henry II*, 41–8. On the date of Henry's accession as duke of Normandy, see Davis, *Stephen*, 107, n. 27.

[17] RT, 161, 165–6.

[18] *Ibid.*, 186, 201–4; Chibnall, *Matilda*, 163; Warren, *Henry II*, 81–7, 195–6. Warren was sceptical about Henry's intentions regarding Ireland in 1155 and regarded the similarly dated papal bull *Laudabiliter*, which encouraged him 'to enlarge the boundaries of the Church' as inspired by Archbishop Theobald. However, the text of the bull as we have it suggests that the pope was responding to Henry's initial proposal, and there is no good reason to doubt Robert de Torigni's report of the council which deliberated on the planned invasion.

[19] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warner (RS, 1861–91), v, 306; cf. (on his studiousness) Peter of Blois in *Becket Materials*, VII, 573. For this interpretation of Henry II, see Gillingham, 'Conquering kings'.

reign, it still does not tell the whole story. Despite the hectic lifestyle and competing priorities of these early years, he did find the time to preside at lawsuits.[20] Although Clarendon and Woodstock were much-frequented hunting-lodges, Henry despatched a good deal of business while staying there.[21] Among the administrative initiatives he authorised were the issue of a new coinage[22] and the introduction of legislation to protect seisin and prohibit unsupported criminal accusations, all accomplished before the start of his third visit to England as king, in January 1163.[23] It was during this visit that – with the immediate political problems arising from the civil war now resolved – Henry was to give detailed attention to financial and judicial affairs.

However, when he landed in England on 8 December 1154, his immediate priority was to reaffirm his position as king. He received the fealty of several barons at Winchester and then proceeded to his coronation at Westminster, with Queen Eleanor, eleven days later.[24] The coronation would be followed over the next few years by ceremonial crown-wearings at St Edmunds, outside Lincoln, and at Worcester, the last probably at Easter 1158 when Eleanor again took part.[25] Steps were also taken at a council held at Wallingford in April 1155 to establish the succession to the throne, barons being required to swear fealty to the king's infant sons William and Henry.[26] William died in the following year, but the oaths to Henry the Younger would be renewed on the occasion of the king's return to England in January 1163.[27]

It was greatly to Henry II's advantage that no serious rival emerged to challenge his right to the English throne. Of his two brothers, the youngest, William, was certainly with him in England early in the reign.[28] Plans to reward him with the kingdom of Ireland or with the Warenne estates in marriage to the heiress Isabel came to naught, but he received the *vicomté* of Dieppe and estates in fifteen English shires, only to die

[20] E.g. *Lawsuits*, II, nos. 360, 371, 377; *Coucher Book of the Cistercian Abbey of Kirkstall*, ed. W. T. Lancaster and W. P. Baildon (Thoresby Society, 1904), no. 266. For further discussion on these and other cases determined in the king's presence, see below ch. 5.

[21] *Itinerary*, e.g. 14, 30, 34–5, 37, 63, 66–70.

[22] Diceto, I, 283; Warren, *Henry II*, 265–6.

[23] J. G. H. Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 256–7; below, ch. 5.

[24] RT, 182; Gervase, I, 159–60; Newburgh, I, 95–6, 101. Archbishop Theobald appears to have headed the government in England in the period between Stephen's death and Henry II's arrival: HH, 774; Saltman, *Theobald*, 41.

[25] *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 174–6; *PR3H*, 107; Newburgh, I, 117–18; Howden, I, 216; Diceto, I, 302.

[26] RT, 184.

[27] Diceto, I, 306; RT, 189, 216. A gold crown was prepared for Henry the Younger during 1161–2 (*PR8H*, 43).

[28] *RAH*, I, nos. 56–8; *CCR*, IV, no. 257 (at Westminster, 1154x58) and *Ancient Charters*, ed. J. H. Round (P. R. Society, 1888), nos. 34, 36 (both at Nottingham, 1155x58). He was in the king's company at Colchester in May 1157 (*Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 176; *Itinerary*, 26–7).

without issue in January 1164, so ensuring that the grants had no lasting effect.[29] The other brother, Geoffrey, was more troublesome, resenting Henry's succession to the county of Anjou and taking up arms against him in both 1152 and 1156; evidence that he came to England is very limited, and the king may deliberately have kept him away, finding him a convenient apanage instead in the county of Nantes. In the event, any possible threat from this quarter was soon removed when Geoffrey, in his turn, died childless in July 1158.[30] The only other potential challenger to the throne was Stephen's surviving son William, who had negotiated his own terms with Henry in 1153 and had been compensated accordingly, becoming the wealthiest lay magnate in the kingdom.[31] Henry moved against him in May 1157, requiring him to surrender his English and Norman castles, several former royal manors in Surrey, and the holdings in Pevensey and Norfolk conceded to him under the peace settlement: he was left with all that Stephen had held at Henry I's death, with the honour of Warenne in right of his wife, and with the comital titles which accompanied these lands.[32] Friction in East Anglia involving William and Hugh Bigod, who also forfeited his castles, seems to have prompted these measures, but it was a sign of the times – and probably also of William's personality – that there was no vengeful 'flight to arms' as there might have been in the previous reign. William evidently appealed in vain to the pope[33] but was sufficiently in Henry's favour to be knighted by him at Carlisle in June 1158 and to accompany him on the Toulouse campaign in the following year. It was while returning from Toulouse, in October 1159, that he died. He was yet another who conveniently left no heirs, allowing Stephen's old baronial lands to pass to the crown and the Warenne heiress, honour and earldom to be given in 1164 to the king's illegitimate half-brother Hamelin.[34]

One is bound to reflect upon Henry's good fortune. In the second half of the 1160s, both his brothers were in their graves while his own sons, born in 1155, 1157 and 1158, were as yet too young to assume personal control.[35] Had Henry II died in this period, Queen Eleanor would

[29] RT, 186, 221; *Becket Materials*, III, 142; 'Draco Normannicus' in *Chronicles*, II, 67; Warren, *Henry II*, 195, 449; Chibnall, *Matilda*, 163–4.

[30] RT, 165–70, 186–90, 196; Geoffrey appears as a witness, above William, to *Ancient Charters*, no. 34, issued at Northampton probably in 1155 (cf. *Acta*, no. 205; T. A. M. Bishop, *Scriptores Regis* (Oxford, 1960), 57 and plate xxvi b, the scribe being one active *c.*1155); Warren, *Henry II*, 65–6.

[31] Richardson and Sayles, *Governance*, 253; J. H. Round, *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (Westminster, 1901), 147–80.

[32] RT, 192–3; *PR3H*, 94 (where the proportionate allowance to the sheriff for the Surrey manors suggests that they were resumed in May); cf. Warren, *Henry II*, 67 and n. 5, where the surrenders are assigned to the council of May 1157 reported in *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 174–6.

[33] JS, *Letters*, I, 82. [34] RT, 196, 206, 221; Warren, *Henry II*, 365.

[35] The births of Henry the Younger, Richard and Geoffrey are noted in RT, 183, 195, 197.

doubtless have governed on behalf of Henry the Younger, to whom the barons had done homage, but the king would have had great cause for concern on his deathbed if a representative of the house of Blois had still been waiting in the wings: one, moreover, who had a territorial base even larger than Stephen's had been in 1135. If the series of deaths in 1153 had been a sign of God's blessing upon the Angevin cause,[36] the same might be said of the subsequent failure of Stephen's line: by 1160, both his legitimate sons were dead, and neither had left progeny with ambition for the throne.

Even so, Henry deserves full credit for his forceful assertion of authority when occasion required it. In the summer of 1157 Malcolm IV king of Scotland surrendered territories gained under Stephen with no more than token protest, but the Welsh princes only submitted after a dangerous and costly military campaign later in the year.[37] One of Henry's first acts as king, at Christmas 1154, was to order the expulsion of foreign mercenaries and the rasing of castles built since his grandfather's death, although the best were to be surrendered instead: measures with a significance as much psychological as physical, in signalling that the time for conflict had passed.[38] Security was also addressed through a major castle-improvement programme, which included work on those at Scarborough and Southampton, previously in the hands of William of Aumale and the bishop of Winchester. There was further expenditure on other royal buildings (*domus regis*) at Clarendon, Westminster, Woodstock, Brampton and elsewhere, including 66s. 8d. apparently to repair the exchequer buildings.[39] All this bears out Robert de Torigni's account of the building or upgrading of castles and royal houses, 'not only in Normandy but also in

[36] *Gesta Steph.*, 239.

[37] RT, 192–3, 195; Newburgh, I, 105–9; Gervase, I, 165–6; *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest*, ed. and transl. T. Jones (2nd edn, Cardiff, 1973), 134–9; Warren, *Henry II*, 68–71, 161–2, 182.

[38] RT, 183; Gervase, I, 160–1; Newburgh, I, 101–2. On the fate of Stephen's mercenary leader William of Ypres, see *PR3H*, 101–2; *Becket Materials*, III, 19; JS, *Letters*, I, nos. 23, 24 and pp. 258–60; Amt, *Accession,* 87–91. For the destruction of castles formerly belonging to the bishop of Winchester and Geoffrey de Mandeville, see *PR2H*, 54; *PR4H*, 132; 'Annales de Wigornia' in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard (RS, 1864–9), IV, 380.

[39] For work on Southampton castle, see *PR2H*, 53; *PR3H*, 107; *PR4H*, 179; *PR5H*, 50. For similar work at Scarborough, see *PR4H*, 146; *PR5H*, 29–31; *PR6H*, 14; *PR7H*, 36; *PR8H*, 50; *PR9H*, 57–8; *PR10H*, 12. Among other castles on which Henry II's early pipe rolls record work are Berkhamstead, Cambridge, Wark and Winchester (*PR2H*, 14, 21; *PR3H*, 96, 108; *PR4H*, 152, 165, 175, 177; *PR5H*, 7, 13–14, 48, 53; *PR6H*, 12, 56–7; *PR7H*, 23; *PR8H*, 37, 49). Some of these references do not appear in R. A. Brown, 'Royal castle-building in England, 1154–1216', *EHR*, 70 (1955), 353–98. Other building or repair is mentioned as follows: Clarendon, *PR2H*, 56–7; *PR3H*, 77, 104, 106; *PR4H*, 115; *PR6H*,16; *PR7H*, 8; *PR8H*, 12; *PR9H*, 45; *PR10H*, 14; *PR11H*, 56; Westminster, *PR2H*, 4; *PR8H*, 67; *PR11H*, 31–2; Woodstock, *PR2H*, 36; *PR10H*, 7; Brampton, *PR3H*, 95; *PR6H*, 32. The expenditure 'in reparatione domorum de Scaccario' (*PR2H*, 4) is discussed (with suggested reinterpretation) in J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's war', *ANS*, 14 (1992), 91–114 (at 110–11).

the kingdom of England, the duchy of Aquitaine, the county of Anjou, Maine, Touraine'.[40]

A statement such as this reminds us that the restoration of orderly government in England was but part of a process which embraced Henry's Angevin empire as a whole. Here was a king of England whose heart lay in Anjou and who spent less than a third of his life in the country which gave him his throne.[41] The well-known summary of his itinerary in *Cambridge Medieval History* volume v shows that, of his thirty-five years as king of England, some fifteen were passed in Normandy, seven elsewhere in France and the remaining thirteen in England, Wales or Ireland; in the first eight years of his reign, only two and a half were spent in his kingdom, but he was then in England or Wales for all but a few weeks between January 1163 and March 1166.[42] England gave him a status equal to that of his Capetian rivals and was potentially an invaluable resource, but the challenges it posed had to await their turn on Henry's busy agenda and could be addressed only intermittently. It should of course be said that, whichever territory he was in, the king received suitors from all parts of his empire and issued writs and charters accordingly,[43] but a link between his itinerary and the timing of major political and administrative initiatives is unmistakable. In Normandy, for example, the issue of an edict prohibiting unsupported criminal accusations, the re-enforcement of the decrees of the council of Lillebonne defining the limits of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the launch of an enquiry by sworn inquest into customary royal and baronial revenues, all belong to the period between Christmas 1159 and the beginning of 1163; these were years when Henry spent the bulk of his time in the duchy and seems to have taken personal control of its government following the retirement and death of the seneschal Robert de Neufbourg.[44] In England, likewise, the most pressing governmental problems were tackled while Henry was in the country: when he was away there was not the same drive for reform.

[40] RT, 209–10 (assigned to 1161).

[41] Henry was born in Le Mans and returned to Chinon to die at the age of fifty-six. He spent about three and a half years on the English side of the Channel prior to his accession, over the four visits of 1142–4, 1146–7, 1149 and 1153–4 (A. L. Poole, 'Henry Plantagenet's early visits to England', *EHR*, 47 (1932), 447–52; *RRAN*, III, xlvi–xlviii) in addition to his thirteen as king.

[42] D. M. Stenton, 'England: Henry II' in *Cambridge Medieval History*, v, ed. J. R. Tanner, C. W. Prévite-Orton and Z. N. Brooke (Cambridge, 1929), 554, n. 1. *Itinerary*, 77–9, shows that Henry's sojourn in Normandy early in 1165 was of uncertain duration, beginning in Lent (17 February to 3 April) according to RT, 224 and ending about the middle of May.

[43] Warren, *Henry II*, 93–4. As examples may be cited the sequence of charters attributed to 1159 in *RAH*, I, nos. 124–32, which show Henry in Chinon, Poitiers, Saintes, Tours and Le Mans dealing with issues from various parts of England and western France.

[44] RT, 203–4, 212, 217; 'Continuatio Beccensis', *ibid.*, 324, 327; cf. C. H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (New York, 1918), 170–1, 329–30; Boussard, *Le Gouvernement*, 421–2; Warren, *Henry II*, 94–6, 434 n. 4.

Henry had devoted the months immediately before his accession as king of England to the recovery of lost ducal demesnes in Normandy, the suppression of rebellion both there and in Aquitaine, and the negotiation of an agreement whereby Louis VII king of France would cede two border castles. Between January 1156 and April 1157 he was in France again, doing homage for his continental territories to Louis VII, forcing his troublesome younger brother Geoffrey to come to terms, and consolidating his position in Aquitaine.[45] Then from August 1158 a series of diplomatic and military endeavours were to keep him away from England for a further four and a half years. The second half of 1158 was taken up with the negotiation of the marriage alliance involving his son Henry – now heir to the throne following the death of his elder brother William – and Louis VII's daughter Margaret, with the enforced submission of Conan IV duke of Brittany, and with the recovery of border castles from Theobald count of Blois and Rotrou count of Perche. Preparations for the Toulouse campaign, including the negotiation of an alliance with the count of Barcelona, occupied much of the spring of 1159, the expedition itself the whole of the summer, only for Henry to abandon his siege of the city towards the end of September; the only territorial gain from the enterprise was the border county of Quercy.[46] With hindsight, the enterprise could be seen as the start of forty years' warfare between the kings of England and France[47] – it brought Louis VII in person to the defence of Toulouse and led Henry in the autumn to campaign on Normandy's frontiers with the French royal domain – but in the short term a truce had developed by May 1160 into a full peace settlement, the opening clause of which underlined Henry II's consistent purpose in this opening phase of his reign: Louis VII 'restored to the king of England all the rights and tenements of King Henry his grandfather, which he held on the day he was alive and dead'. The only exception was the Vexin, much of which was to remain under the lordship of the king of France unless the marriage negotiated in 1158 took place with the Church's consent within the next three years; in the event, Henry was able to outmanœuvre Louis by obtaining that consent, which meant that the marriage had been concluded and the Vexin had been occupied and fortified, by the close of the year.[48] Meanwhile, various castles in Normandy, Brittany, Maine, Blois and Aquitaine were forcibly surrendered to Henry, and Waleran of Meulan was temporarily deprived of his

[45] RT, 179–81, 186–92.
[46] *Ibid.*, 196–203; 'Continuatio Beccensis', *ibid.*, 318–23; Newburgh, I, 121–6; Gervase, I, 166–7; Warren, *Henry II,* 71–7, 82–7.
[47] Newburgh, II, 491.
[48] *RAH*, I, no. 141; RT, 205–8; 'Continuatio Beccensis', *ibid.*, 324; Diceto, I, 303–4.

Norman estates.[49] Eventually, a fresh peace was concluded between the kings of England and France, reinforced when together they met Pope Alexander III in the late summer or autumn of 1162. This at last gave Henry sufficient security to leave his continental territories. 'Having settled his affairs, including his castles in Normandy, Aquitaine, Anjou and also Gascony, Henry came to Barfleur at Advent, wishing to cross over, if possible, before Christmas.' In fact, contrary winds meant that he was obliged to spend Christmas at Cherbourg, but he eventually landed at Southampton on 25 January 1163.[50]

The central administration in England had by now settled into a routine, but the king's arrival was to inject fresh dynamism into the search for additional sources of finance and to the identification, recovery and advancement of royal rights. Political problems remained: between 1163 and 1166 Henry twice led armies into Wales, secured a renewal of homage from Malcolm IV king of Scots, negotiated the marriage of two daughters with German princes[51] and, most famously, became embroiled in conflict with his archbishop of Canterbury. But the Becket controversy arose out of Henry's insistence on asserting his rights and reclaiming royal jurisdiction – in this case at the expense of the Church – and should be seen in the context of wide-ranging efforts made in these years to enhance the authority of the king. The measures taken in this period were to lead to significant changes in the governance of the country, going far beyond the initially declared aim of recovering for the crown what had been enjoyed under Henry I.[52] Yet – characteristically – having prompted reform Henry left its detailed implementation to others, for after his departure from Southampton in March 1166 conflicts with the king of France and with rebels in Brittany and Aquitaine were to keep him out of England for the next four years.[53] This was an approach to administrative development in the kingdom which was to be repeated several times during the course of the reign. Initiatives such as the launch of the 'Inquest of Sheriffs' in 1170, the issue in 1176 of the Assize of Northampton and provision for its enforcement by six teams each of

[49] RT, 209–12; Warren, *Henry II*, 95, 100–3; D. B. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins* (Cambridge, 1986), 77–8.

[50] RT, 215–16.

[51] *Ibid.*, 216–26; Newburgh, 1, 139–46; Diceto, 1, 308–18; *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book*, 142–7; Warren, *Henry II*, 96–100, 492–3. One of the proposed marriages, that of Henry's daughter Matilda to Henry the Lion duke of Saxony, duly took place in 1168.

[52] The extent to which there was an 'Angevin leap forward' in judicial administration has been reconsidered, e.g. in Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship*, esp. 253–81, and *English Common Law*, esp. 118–56. However, it is clear that a series of measures taken from the mid-1160s onwards had the effect of changing the conduct of lawsuits and transforming the operation of the king's government in this field. The issues are discussed more fully in ch. 5.

[53] RT, 226–44; Warren, *Henry II*, 100–10.